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⁴⁰Rehberg wants new EPA administrator to visit Libby

Rep. Denny Rehberg, R-Mont., has invited the new head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to visit Libby to see first-hand the community's battle with asbestos exposure.

Rehberg wrote to EPA Administrator Steve Johnson, saying he wants him to help set the community "on the course of a clean, bright, and healthy future."

"We need to keep the EPA's

attention focused on Libby," said Rehberg, a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

For nearly 60 years, most of the world's supply of vermiculite ore was produced from

the former W.R. Grace mine near Libby. News reports in 1999 brought to light the widespread death and disease linked to asbestos exposure from the mine.

The discovery prompted the

federal agency to dispatch an environmental response team to the community. The EPA continues to monitor the source of the contamination and is involved in long-term cleanup in Libby.

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